

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE

SMALL GROUP COPING SKILLS CURRICULUM FOR LATINO UNDOCUMENTED
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillments

For the degree of Science in Counseling,

School Counseling

By

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my parents for their unwavering love and support.

No me alcanzaria este espacio para agradecerles su enorme esfuerzo, trabajo, resiliencia, y sacrificios para brindarme un mayor future. My family is my biggest inspiration, determination, and motivation to continue my educational career and striving for success. I would not be here if it were not for your incredible love and support! No estuviera aqui si no fuera por su enorme apoyo!

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Last but not least, I want to dedicate this project to all immigrant students that despite all the hardships of life they continue to demonstrate resilience to overcome the formidable legal, educational, financial, and social constraints that exist today. Your hard work and dedication will determine your success, not your immigration status.

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ABSTRACT

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by

Jose Luis Sandoval

Master of Science in Counseling

School Counseling

The purpose of this graduate project was to create a 7-week long small group curriculum to teach Latino undocumented high school students practical coping skills. The goal of this small group curriculum is to provide students stress management coping strategies to effectively manage stress related to everyday experiences, fears, worries, and challenges at school, home, and at community. The small group would be facilitated by a professional school counselor who would guide undocumented students to utilize stress management skills to help them cope with stressors they face. The small group curriculum allows Latino undocumented students to learn practical stress management coping skills to develop stress reduction practices.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Introduction

Undocumented immigrant youth and their families face a multitude of economic and social barriers that negatively affects their health and well-being, including financial hardship, limited educational opportunities, discrimination, and deportation fears (Potocnick, May, & Flores, 2019). Compared to other immigrants, undocumented immigrant youth have higher rates of anxiety, emotional distress, and behavioral problems (Potocnick et al., 2019). Also, a significant number of immigrant youth reside in urban areas and attend underperforming schools that are resource deficient (Murillo, 2017). The economic, legal, social and educational barriers prevalent in our society may prevent undocumented immigrant youth achieving success.

Children's legal status may affect their educational progress both directly, due to state policies limiting access public resources for undocumented immigrants, and indirectly through its association with family poverty and diminished expectations for the future (Greenman & Hall, 2013). Recent estimates indicate that approximately 11 million undocumented migrants are living in the United States, of whom about 9 percent are younger than 18 years of age and nearly two-thirds hail from Mexico or Central America (Greenman & Hall, 2013). One out of every 20 Latino children is unauthorized (Greenman & Hall, 2013). Additionally, an estimated 5.5 million children and adolescents are growing up with unauthorized parents and are experiencing multiple and yet unrecognized developmental consequences as a result of their family's existence in the shadow of the law (Suarez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Orozco-Suarez, 2011). The effects of unauthorized status on development across the lifespan are uniformly negative, with millions of U.S. children and youth at risk of lower educational performance, economic stagnation, blocked mobility, and ambiguous belonging (Sparks, 2011). For adolescents from

undocumented families, school counselors may serve as a resource to draw upon for support should the adolescents decide to disclose their family status (Kam, Gasiorek, Pines, & Steuber-Fazio, 2018).

Statement of Problem

Undocumented status is an overarching issue that impacts the academic, socio-emotional, and college/career advancement of undocumented students (Morrison et al., 2016). Concerning Latino immigrant youth, research suggests a host of stressful experiences included but not limited to isolation, loss of close friendships, obtaining legal documentation, going through acculturation process, learning the English language, adjusting to the schooling, negotiating their cultural identity, and housing problems (Perez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, & Cortes, 2009). Undocumented immigrants not only may experience academic, career, and educational barriers, they may deal with stress related to everyday experiences, worries, and challenges at home, school setting, and in their community. Undocumented Latino immigrants may face unique stressors when entering the United States such as pre and postmigration trauma, acculturative stress, identity confusion, loss and family separation, fears related to deportation, and depression (Talleyrand & Vojtech, 2019). Due to linguistic and cultural barriers, as well as fear of deportation, undocumented immigrant students have remained an invisible group in the school system who can be subject to discrimination and marginalization (Chen, Budianto, & Wong, 2010). The legal aspect along with many other educational and structural barriers may negatively impact undocumented students' academic achievement and well-being. An undocumented immigrant student may live in emotional distress that may limit his/her capacity to succeed or adjust positively to a new school setting. However, there is little research into how Latino undocumented immigrants perceive their status and the stressors related to that status.

Moreover, there is even less research that examines how Latino undocumented immigrants cope with stressors associated to their status. The problem that this project will address is that despite the need, there are no readily available small group curriculum that are geared specifically for school counselors and group facilitators to utilize with this population.

Purpose of Project

The purpose of this graduate project is to design a small group curriculum for Latino undocumented high school students to learn different coping skills that they may utilize to cope with academic, social, and emotional challenges. This small counseling group would be facilitated by a professional high school counselor and will focus on helping undocumented Latino immigrant high school students process their experiences as immigrants in the educational setting and beyond. By working together with a high school counselor, students can learn different stress management coping strategies to effectively manage stress related to everyday experiences, fears, worries, and challenges at school, home, and at community. The professional school counselor would guide undocumented students by utilizing the benefits of small group work. By sharing the different experiences through small group counseling, the hope is that each student will be able to learn effective stress management coping skills to develop stress reduction practices.

Terminology

- Latino/a refers to the person who lives in the United States who comes from, or whose family comes from Latin America (Cambridge Dictionary).
- Undocumented/Unauthorized immigrants refers to immigrants who live within the United States without legal authorization. These individuals do not hold a current permanent visa, are not U.S. citizens, and have not been permitted admission under the current set of

rules and work permits. The terms “undocumented immigrant” and “unauthorized immigrant” are used interchangeably (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011).

- Familism refers to an affiliative obedience as youth demonstrating unquestioning respect and deference to parents and filial obligations as the need to support and assist families (Cupito, Stein, & Gonzalez, 2014).
- Acculturative stress refers to adjusting to a new culture and navigating between two cultures (Sirin et al, 2013).
- Deportation refers to the action of forcing someone to leave a country, especially someone who has no legal right to be there or who has broken the law (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020).

Summary:

In the next chapter, the literature will be reviewed about the overall academic challenges, environmental pressures, and the potential stressors undocumented Latino/a high school students confront in their daily lives. The literature will review the crucial role a professional school counselor plays when working with this student population. Finally, in the literature review, the use of group counseling in the school setting, as group counseling is an effective way to reach multiple students, will be examined. Lastly, the literature will review coping strategies that can assist students living in uncertain immigration status to better cope with real obstacles and hardships in the educational setting, hopefully improving their educational experience. Also, successful school-based small group curriculums for immigrant adolescent students will be reviewed.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Introduction

This literature review chapter will examine how the condition of illegal status affects millions of adolescents in varying degrees of their academic paths. Potential stressors and risk factors that account for Latino undocumented students' emotional distress will be reviewed. The literature review will also describe the role of the professional school counselor. Group counseling proves to be a time-efficient and effective way to assist students suffering from their condition of illegal status. A small group counseling may allow undocumented students to process the many adversities they confront in their lives.

Adolescence Development

Physical Development. Adolescence is a transition between childhood and adulthood entailing major physical, cognitive, and psychosocial changes (Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2009). A significant physical change that occurs during adolescence is the onset of puberty, the process that leads to sexual maturity, or the ability to reproduce which encompasses the years between 11 and 19 or 20 (Papalia et al., 2009). There are evident physical changes in body proportions and form, rapid growth in height and weight, and attainment of sexual maturity. Also, hormonal activity in adolescents depends significantly on body fat for successful reproduction and increasing levels of androgens play a part in the growth of pubic, facial, armpit hair, oilier skin, and development of body odor (Papalia et al., 2009).

Cognitive Development. During adolescence students experience a substantial amount of cognitive growth. Adolescents enter Piaget's level of cognitive development called formal operations in which their ability to think abstractly develops. Learners in the formal operations

stage can participate in their educational experiences require the conceptualization of abstract relationships, employ inductive thinking, and expand the logical thinking processes (Manning, 1994). Adolescents' cognitive development tends to occur at age 11, in which adolescents no longer limited their thinking in the here and now, they can think in terms of what might be, not just what is (Papalia et al., 2009). Adolescents are capable of abstract reasoning. They can use symbols to represent other symbols, they can find richer meanings in literature, and they can expand their visualization of possibilities to form and test hypotheses. As students mature, their ability to process information accelerates, their short-term memory capacity increases and their ability to reason improves (Watson & Gable, 2013).

During adolescence young individuals attain higher cognitive levels, in which they become capable of reasoning regarding moral dilemmas. Adolescents can consider other people's views, learn how to deal with relationships, solve social problems, and see themselves as social beings. Papalia et al. (2009) suggests that adolescents with supportive and authoritative parents, having more close friends, spending quality time with them, and being perceived as leaders, tend to reason at higher levels (Papalia et al., 2009).

Psychosocial Development. Human development theorist Eric Erickson suggests that one of the main tasks for adolescents is to develop a coherent sense of identity. Erickson defines identity as a coherent conception of the self, made up goals, values, and beliefs to which the person is solidly committed. According to Erickson a coherent identity is critical for being a caring individual and a capable parent for adolescents throughout adult life along with finding one's place within the community beyond immediate family (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011). Identity formation is, in part, achieved by mastering cultural rites of passage like obtaining a driver's license getting a first job, and, going off to college (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011).

Erickson viewed identity formation as a psychosocial development, in which an adolescent seeks to develop a coherent sense of the self, including the role she or he is to play in society.

Unfortunately, for unauthorized youth their identity formation is complicated when they come to face a negative social mirror that portrays them as unwanted and illegitimate (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011). Identity formation occurs when adolescents resolve three major issues: the choice of an occupation, the adoption of values to live by, and the development of a satisfying sexual identity Papalia et al. (2009).

Papalia et al. (2009) cites four identity statuses of Erickson's view on identity formation based on the presence or absence of crisis and commitment; identity achievement, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity diffusion (Papalia et al., 2009). Identity achievement is characterized by commitment to choices made following a crisis, a period spent in exploring alternatives. Foreclosure is proposed as a stage in which a person who has not spent time considering alternatives is committed to other people's plans for his or her life. Moratorium is proposed at a stage in which claimed young individuals consider alternatives and seemed headed for commitment. Identity diffusion status describes that an adolescent lacks commitment and a lack of serious consideration of alternatives.

Adolescence can be a period of stressful life events for young people forming relationships with family, peers, and society. These difficult times in adolescents' lives may affect immigrant youth's experiences in school. Adolescents may want to seek connection with and belonging to a group, even as they assert their unique and distinct identities. Within this developmental context, the social losses experienced by first-generation immigrant students who have been separated from their peer groups in countries of origin may be difficult (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). Moreover, immigrant high school students may experience isolation from U.S.

peer groups who are different linguistically and culturally (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). Family conflict, depression, and risky behaviors are more common during adolescent development. Effective parental monitoring and parenting styles can help prevent adolescent problem behaviors. Authoritative parenting can foster healthy psychosocial development by emphasizing important rules, norms, and values but are willing to listen, explain, and negotiate. The most secure adolescents come from supportive relationships with parents and having important emotional support from peers. The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy, understanding, and moral guidance in which adolescents achieve a sense of autonomy and independence (Papalia et al., 2009).

High School

The U.S. high schools are aligned with a set of nationwide common core standards to ensure that all students within their K-12 education are college and career ready in literacy and mathematics no later than the end of high school. The common core standards are aligned with college and career expectations; they are clear, understandable, and consistent. Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through a high set of skills; build upon strength and lessons of current state standards. The common core standards are evidence-based and informed by other top performing countries to ensure all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society. The common core standards are a set of expectations that define the knowledge and skills of students should have within K-12 education careers so students will graduate from high school and able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and workforce training programs (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2017).

Many traditional public high schools across all the school districts run their calendar years starting from late August to early June; the calendar year is composed of semester or

quarter track system. Most high schools follow a standard bell schedule typically composed of 6 classes that begins at 8 a.m. (1st period) and end at 3 p.m. (6th period); early dismissal on Tuesdays-1:30 p.m. Professional Development (PD).

Most high schools across the U.S encompass 4-grade levels (9-12th) in which students in ninth to twelfth grade take courses that meet State Educational Standards for High School Graduation. For instance, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has implemented a College and Career Readiness through the A-G initiative to ensure all students have the option to enroll at a university and be prepared for a career (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2017). On June 14, 2005, the LAUSD Board of Education approved the A-G Resolution to create educational equity through the implementation of the A-G course sequence as part of the high school graduation requirement (LAUSD Parent- Student Manual, 2018-2019). The A-G Resolution establishes a graduation requirement for all students to complete successfully a fifteen a-g course sequence to obtain the high school diploma which allows students to transition into a college or career of choice (LAUSD Parent-Student Manual, 2018-2019). In the fifteen courses sequence students are required to take three years of A) History/Social Studies, four years of B) English, three years of C) Mathematics, 2 years of D) Science, two years of E) Language Other Than English (LOTE), one year of F) Visual and Performing Arts, one year of G) College Preparatory Elective. Additional requirements include two years of Physical Education, one semester of Health, one semester of Economics, one semester of Principles of American Democracy. Non-Course Requirements consist of Service-Learning Project and Career Pathway. Students must earn a passing letter grade “D” as semester courses earn students five credits and yearlong courses earn ten credits which adds up to a total of 210 credits needed for graduation (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2017).

When comparing the American educational school system to a Latin America's system, there are a lot of differences to consider for undocumented Latino high school students' placement into a new school setting. For instance, courses in most *Preparatorias* in Mexico are semester-based. Students transferring from the third year of *Secundaria* schools (equivalent to 9th grade in the U.S.) may be granted credit equivalent to one year of high school courses (Education Systems of Six Selected Countries, 2015). Also, students transferring from *Preparatorias* schools (equivalent to 10th to 12th grades in the U.S.) who completed one full semester, the student may be granted credit for courses the previous semester. Likewise, students who graduated from a *Preparatoria* and transferred to the United States should be allowed to enroll in high school (Education Systems of Six Selected Countries, 2015)

In Latin America many countries divide *Preparatorias* (equivalent to 10th to 12th grades in the U.S.) into three years which consists of six semesters total. *Preparatorias* also referred to as “educacion media superior” (secondary education), serve students aged 15-17 which prepare students for the workforce or give them the option to continue to higher education. There are three diploma options for students who attend *Preparatoria*: “el bachillerato general,” general baccalaureate, “el bachillerato tecnologico,” technical baccalaureate, and “la educacion profesional tecnica,” professional technical education (Education Systems of Six Selected Countries, 2015). *Preparatorias*' grading system scored students on a numerical scale from 1-10, 10 being good, 6 being “average sufficient,” and 5 failing the course.

Despite the similarities or differences between the school systems in Latin American countries and the school system in the U.S., the high school student in U.S. experiences multiple academic, socio-emotional and individual obstacles that may impede his or her academic success. A high school student today, in U.S. is charged with navigating a curriculum that has

hundreds of options, which has created an infinity of pathways from 9th grade through 12th grade (Crosnoe, 2011). Because of the cumulative nature of learning, the high self-propagation of teacher, parent and self-expectations, and the complex chains of prerequisites and requirements, curricular pathways through high school are quite difficult (Crosnoe, 2011).

The transition to a new school setting is quite difficult for many adolescents but has particular challenges for undocumented immigrant youth. To ensure the academic success of the students who have attended *Preparatorias* and moved to a new educational school setting, The Center for Migrant Education has developed a set of suggested guidelines for the placement of migrant students into a new school environment. The Center for Migrant Education takes into consideration the acquisition of English language skills, the educational knowledge skills, and the involvement of parents in the decision-making process (Suggested Guidelines for Grade-Level Placement). A professional school counselor can play a critical role with new students to smooth a successful transition to a new educational setting. School counselors may help to facilitate the adjustment of immigrant students by helping them better cope with their academic, developmental, social, and other needs and issues such as English language acquisition, post-traumatic stress syndrome, and racial labeling ((Williams & Butler, 2003).

Latino undocumented immigrant students

Undocumented immigrants come to the United States from all parts of the world. There are currently 41.3 million immigrants living in the United States (U.S.) (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017). The population of unauthorized migrants is larger now than at any time since the United States began trying to regulate immigration in the early twentieth century. During the boom economic years in the last decade of the twentieth century the unauthorized population grew

dramatically from under 1 million in 1980 to a peak of nearly 12 million in 1996 (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011).

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, current estimates are that 11.9 million (4%) of the nation's population are unauthorized immigrants (Pew Hispanic Center, 2016). Their children, both those who are unauthorized immigrants themselves and those who are U.S. citizens make up 6.8 % of the students enrolled in the nation's elementary and secondary schools (U.S. Census, 2011). Demographers had predicted that by 2020, 30% of all U.S. children will be children of immigrants (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017).

The rapid growth of the Latino population over the last several decades has fundamentally reshaped the racial/ethnic mix of the U.S. population (Greeman & Hall, 2013). According to the Cambridge Dictionary a Latino is a person who lives in the U.S. and who comes from, or whose family comes from Latin America (Cambridge Dictionary). Consistent changes in many countrys' immigration laws drive larger numbers of Latino immigrants and their families to settle in the United States (Abrego, 2011). According to the U.S. Census Bureau about three-quarters (76%) of the foreign-born immigrant population are Latinos (Census Bureau, 2011). Most undocumented immigrants come from Mexico (59%) and Central America (11%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Undocumented youth under the age of 18 make up 16 percent of undocumented immigrants in the United States (Abrego, 2011).

Undocumented status may present numerous detrimental ramifications for Latino undocumented immigrant high school students. Cobb, Meca, Xie, Schwartz, and Moise (2017) identified undocumented immigrants in the U.S. as residents who are not U.S. citizens, do not hold a permanent resident visa, and do not have a permit for work or residence (Cobb et al., 2017). Similarly, Suarez-Orozco et al. (2011) stated a more neutral descriptive term

unauthorized referred to immigrants who live within the country without legal authorization. These individuals do not hold a current permanent visa, are not U.S. citizens, and have not been permitted admission under the current set of rules and work permits (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011). Both terms may be used interchangeably to refer to Latino high school immigrant illegal status. Moreover, Suarez-Orozco et al. (2011) developed a conceptual framework to systematically examine how unauthorized status affects millions of adolescents in their developmental trajectories (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011). Researchers closely examined a range of developmental outcomes shaped by unauthorized status including, health, cognitive, educational, socio-emotional, and labor market access. The effects of unauthorized status on development among youth are consistently negative and harmful which puts youth at risk of lower educational performance, economic stagnation, blocked mobility, and ambiguous belonging (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011).

Latino immigrant adolescents in the U.S., in general come from Mexican and Central America and have high rates of high school dropout compared to other groups (Greenman & Hall, 2013). Salazar, Martinez, and Ortega (2016) stated that 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school every year, with only 5% of those going on to attend some form of higher education (Salazar et al., 2016).

The legal status influences the educational attainment of undocumented youth (Abrego, 2006). Greenman and Hall (2013) conducted a study with Mexican and Central American (MCA) immigrant youth which used data from 1996, 2001, 2004, and 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), a panel focused on U.S. households' employment and public program experiences to infer the relationship between legal status and educational attainment (Greenman & Hall, 2013). Researchers used an imputation strategy from a sample high school-

aged SIPP respondent (aged 14-18 years) that examined the legal status of immigrant respondents. Researchers suggested three factors why undocumented status may limit educational progress: family socioeconomic disadvantage, the cost of attending college, and expectations for the future. Greenman and Hall (2013) concluded that undocumented students are less likely than documented students to both graduate from high school suggesting that undocumented status may be related to higher school dropout rates among MCA youth immigrant students. Therefore, not completing high school may predict multiple social and economic outcomes including, poverty, unmarried parenthood, and incarceration for Latino unauthorized students (Greenman & Hall, 2013).

Due to their status, undocumented high school students may face significant legal, educational, financial, and policy barriers to pursuing education beyond high school. Despite the existing legal protections for unauthorized immigrants throughout their public education, there are also restrictive legal immigration laws that limit the undocumented youth's educational aspirations. In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled in *Plyer v. Doe* that children have the right to a K-12 public education regardless of immigration status. This landmark case overruled the state of Texas's decision to allow public schools to charge undocumented students' tuition or exclude them altogether (Murillo, 2017). The court reasoned under the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause that a state could not enact a discriminatory classification by identifying a group as non-resident (Murillo, 2017). As a result, undocumented children have access to public K-12 education.

Additionally, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prevents schools from releasing any information from students' records to immigration authorities such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) (Gonzales, 2011). Moreover, FERPA provides

students with safe spaces in educational institutions that are not likely to be targets of ICE raids (Abrego, 2011). School districts are prohibited from inquiring about immigration status to determine district residency as it may discourage parents from enrolling their children in school (Murillo, 2017).

Abrego (2006) conducted a study with documented and undocumented Latino immigrants in the Los Angeles area which examined the effects of undocumented status on access to higher education (Abrego, 2006). Researchers collected data from one year ethnographic and in-depth interviews using methods of participant observation and informal interviews from (n=24) immigrant respondents ranging age from 15-22 years; all participants attended, or recently attended public high schools in and around Los Angeles at the time of the interviews. The students' nationalities consist of 12 undocumented (six Mexican, four Guatemalan, and two Salvadoran) and 12 documented (nine Salvadoran, two Guatemalan, and one Mexican). Most immigrant respondents (both undocumented and documented) were eight years old upon their arrival to the U.S. Abrego (2006) compared the lived experiences just before or after graduation from high school of undocumented students with those of documented Latino immigrants and native-born Latino children of immigrants in low-income families (Abrego, 2006). Abrego (2006) found that undocumented status impeded undocumented immigrant Latino students access to federal financial aid. This becomes important after high school because in most states, both public and private universities classify them as international students and charge them tuition which is three to seven times higher than that of legal residents or U.S. citizens (Abrego, 2006). Undocumented youth face the most difficult challenge associated with their status upon high school graduation when educational expenses make college inaccessible and may lead to a decline in educational motivation (Abrego, 2006).

Gonzales (2011) focused on a transition period (age 16 to 18 years) in which undocumented high school students realized their illegal status (Gonzales, 2011). Undocumented youngsters share a confusing and contradictory status in terms of their legal rights and the opportunities available to them (Gonzales, 2011). Researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with Mexican-origin immigrants growing up in Southern California without legal status in which respondents reported they lived in a state of suspended illegality during their adolescent years. Respondents informed that being undocumented became salient when they learned they cannot legally work, vote, receive financial aid, and drive. Moreover, Gonzales (2011) found that the discovery of illegal status prompted reactions of confusion, anger, frustration, and despair among respondents followed by a paralyzing shock (Gonzales, 2011). He explained that most respondents conveyed that they were not prepared for the dramatic limits of their rights; they struggled to make sense of what had happened to them (Gonzales, 2011). Fear and stigma characterized the everyday lives of unauthorized immigrant students (Abrego, 2011). Abrego (2011) presented similar results in which undocumented Latino immigrants reported that they only learned of their unauthorized status in high school when they had to fill out applications for internships, summer jobs, or college admission (Abrego, 2011). Unable to provide a social security number for the applications, their parents were forced to explain the situation to them. Before that, most undocumented youth had not had to think about their role of legal status in their lives (Abrego, 2011).

Furthermore, legal status is a structural factor that likely influences the patterns of immigrant health (Young & Pebley, 2017). Researchers conducted an analysis of Latino respondents (n=1396) to the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A. FANS) in which they examined variations in physical, and mental health among Latino undocumented,

documented, and native U.S. born in three characteristics; self-reported health (SRH) depression and blood pressure (Young & Pebley, 2017). Researchers found that undocumented Latino immigrants experience greater barriers to health care and more stress-related to anti-immigrant environments and enforcement in daily life than either documented immigrant or U.S. born Latinos. Young and Pebley (2017). Researchers found that undocumented Latino immigrants who had lived in the U.S. for 15 years or fewer were more likely to report worse health and higher blood pressure than documented immigrants and U.S. born Latinos (Young & Pebley, 2017). Researchers suggested that illegal status for undocumented Latino immigrants influences eligibility for public insurance programs such as Medicaid or Medicare, experience barriers to accessing health care. Due to the anti-immigrant environment Latino undocumented immigrants face today, legal status prevents them from accessing healthcare programs which impacts their health.

Cobb et al. (2017) presented similar results which indicated that Latino undocumented immigrants who perceived their experiences as different from those of documented Latino due to unauthorized legal status reported less social equality as evidence by lower well-being, increased experiences of unfair treatment, limited opportunity, and a more adverse context of reception (Cobb et al., 2017). Researchers found that over 69% of undocumented Latino respondents reported their perceived experiences in the U.S. to be different from those of their documented counterparts due to their unauthorized legal status. Cobb et al. (2017) suggested that Latino who perceived less social equality may experience lower overall well-being, less satisfaction with life, and they experienced greater discrimination. Such feelings of rejection due to societal marginalization and social inequality were associated with low self-esteem, low life-satisfaction, and depressive symptoms (Cobb et al., 2107).

When it comes to family values, Latino-Hispanic immigrants place a high value on close family relationships, traditional gender roles, and mutual respect among family members. The family is of utmost importance in the Latino-Hispanic culture; it has been described as the most important factor influencing the lives of Latino-Hispanics (Allison & Bencomo, 2015). Familism and the family support network provide social, emotional, and financial support within the Latino-Hispanic family (Allison & Bencomo, 2015). A narrower construct to familism is affiliative obedience defined as youth demonstrating unquestioning respect and deference to parents and filial obligations as the need to support and assist families (Cupito, Stein, & Gonzalez, 2014). Also, Latino-Hispanic parents expect children to socialize according to traditional gender roles. While Latino female adolescents are expected to caretaking and house cleaning obligations, Latino male adolescents are expected to provide for the family. Consequently, females are granted less freedom outside of the house and is expected to help around the house more (Cupito et al., 2014).

Regarding spiritual values, the Latino-Hispanic culture highly values on religion. Celebrations, beliefs, and rituals associated with religion have been extremely important in the Latino-Hispanic culture and have a reverence for spiritual values that govern their daily lives (Allison & Bencomo, 2015). According to The Pew Hispanic Research center more than 61% of Hispanics reported that religion is important in their lives and acknowledges that they belong to a religion and attend religious services regularly (Allison & Bencomo, 2015).

Potential Stressors and Risk Factors

Added to the pervasive anti-immigrant political environment and rhetoric discourse on immigration laws that target the Latino undocumented immigrants, the Latino undocumented immigrant population must cope with an infinite number of social and personal stressors. Latino

undocumented immigrants may encounter family separation, fear of deportation, discrimination, adjusting to a new culture, and the inability to access resources by having an illegal status. As immigrants migrate to the United States, most undergo a process of adaptation known as acculturation (Cobb et al., 2016). The acculturation process can be potentially stressful for immigrants because they have acquired aspects of the host culture while discarding aspects of their heritage culture (Talleyrand & Vojtech, 2019). Latino undocumented immigrants tend to negotiate between accepting the new cultural norms that they are living in and to some degree renounce to their cultural values to better adapt or navigate the barriers they encounter in their daily lives.

In addition to the stressful difficulties related to acculturation, the Latino unauthorized immigrants experience acculturative stress. Acculturative stress is associated with adjusting to a new culture and navigating between two cultures (Sirin et al., 2013). Acculturative stress may arise from experiencing prejudice and discrimination, learning new and confusing cultural rules and expectations, and immigration-related stressors that may place immigrant youth at risk for depression and anxiety (Sirin et al., 2013). A study conducted by Giano et al. (2019) with Latino 7th-grade students (N=611) in an urban public school district in the south-central in the United States found that Latino youth who experienced an immigration-related arrest of a family member reported significantly higher depressive symptoms than youth who did not (Giano et al., 2019). Likewise, researchers found that the average depression score for youth who experienced the arrest of a family member for immigration violations is higher than their counterparts. Moreover, Giano et al. (2019) found that depressive symptoms magnified among youth who reported that both of their parents have undocumented legal status. Perhaps one of the greatest stressors for Latino youth is the fear of detention and deportation of their undocumented parents

by (ICE) (Giano et al., 2019). Perez et al. (2009) indicated that fear of deportation influenced every aspect of undocumented students' lives. Undocumented students were afraid to go to the hospital because they were worried immigration status would be questioned and some were reluctant to develop close relationships with others for fear of their illegal status being discovered (Perez et., 2009).

In today's current anti-immigrant sentiment, the fear of deportation may be a major stressor for Latino undocumented immigrants. In a survey by the Pew Hispanic Center revealed that most Latinos in the United States worry a lot or some (57%) about deportation regarding themselves, family members, or friends (Arbona et al., 2010). Moreover, one report estimated that 93% of individuals arrested in immigration enforcement are Latino (Giano et al., 2019). Talleyrand and Vojtech (2019) also indicated that studies have shown that undocumented individuals report feelings of loneliness, sadness, feeling trapped, and suffering from immigration-related experiences (Talleyrand & Vojtech, 2019). This may suggest that the fear of detention and deportation is rampant among Latino immigrants living in the U.S.

Arbona et al. (2010) conducted a study with (N=416) documented and undocumented Mexican and Central American immigrants living in two major cities in Texas (Arbona et al., 2010). Researchers examined the fear of deportation, a stressor directly related to legal status. Arbona et al. (2010) found that among immigrants the activities of walking in the street, requesting help from government agencies, and applying for a driver's license elicited the highest level of fear of deportation; one third in the study reported that they avoided activities such as walking in the street or requesting services from government agencies for fear of deportation (Arbona et al., 2010). Researchers suggested that in the social environment created by restrictive immigration legislation, fear of deportation contributes the most to acculturative

stress among Latino immigrants (Arbona et al., 2010). Consequently, educators need to be aware of the stressful effect of acculturative stress to effectively work with unauthorized Latino immigrant students in an educational environment. A study conducted by Jefferies (2014) with undocumented immigrant students from a high school in Massachusetts who have been in the country for less than 5 years found that the mere threat of deportation, not the practice of deportation, that has such an important effect on how administrators serve undocumented youth in schools (Jefferies, 2014). Administrators immediately pointed to fear of deportation as a barrier to accessing information and properly serving this population (Jefferies, 2014).

Another stressor that may be potentially detrimental for unauthorized Latino immigrants is discrimination. Due to the constant media coverage of immigration raids of targeted low socioeconomic minority communities and negatively portrayal of an undocumented immigrant as being a public charge for the country, make Latinos a vulnerable target for discrimination. A study conducted by Cobb et al. (2016) with (N=122) undocumented Latino adults found that individuals who consistently experience day-to-day discrimination tend to report poorer mental health (Cobb et al, 2016). Researchers suggested that results may indicate ethnic identity as a risk factor for the Latino immigrant population through experiences of discrimination (Cobb et al, 2014). The Latino undocumented immigrant youth may encounter discrimination based on their documentation status, skin color, and on their English proficiency (Talleyrand & Vojtech, 2019). It seems that discrimination among immigrant youth may have prevented them from educational success. The undocumented label can make a profound impact on a student's identity development (Crawford, Aguayo, & Valle, 2019).

Coping Skills for Adolescents

According to various studies in adolescents' development it is widely accepted among many researchers that adolescence is a stressful period of development. Adolescents must deal with stressful events in different life domains, academic, socio-emotional, and career readiness. Moreover, adolescents report that they experience stress in their lives and that they attempt to cope with stress in various ways (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000). According to Williams and McGillicuddy-De Lisi (2000) the most widely known definition of coping is the one offered by Lazarus who defined coping as cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage psychological stress or emotional and behavioral response to stress (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000).

In the face of feelings of distress, fear, anxiety, and anger, coping skills may be an effective way for adolescents to help them get through difficult times. The use of effective coping skills may help adolescents to build resilience and to foster academic, social, and personal success. One of the coping skills taught to adolescents is positive-self talk. Positive self-talk is a way to change your thoughts to be more positive, hopeful, and optimistic, even when it seems impossible to do because one is going through such a tough time ("Coping Skills Toolbox," n.d). Positive self-talk is a strategy that students can use to help them get through anxiety-provoking situations. Positive self-talk can help students to break stress up which involves focusing on positive rather than negative statements. When students make positive statements rather than negative ones, it helps build confidence, improve performance, and improve mental skills ("The Coping Skills Toolbox," n.d). Positive affirmations may help students fight their negative thoughts when they are stated several times daily by students.

In the face of personal worries, painful situations, feelings of tension, and stress, students may use guided imagery. Guided imagery is a structured and purposeful strategy that helps students' body by letting their minds take them to healthy places that feel good. It is a daydreaming way to change an individual's thoughts by focusing on senses (sound, vision, taste, touch, movement) by imagining a relaxing place or a soothing person ("Coping Skills Toolbox," n.d). When students may feel upset or stressed out, guided imagery can be a helpful skill to briefly escaping stressful or upsetting situations.

Another technique that adolescents may use in the face of challenging and stressful life situations is progressive muscle relaxation. Muscle relaxations consists of progressively squeezing and then relaxing each muscle of one's body from head to toe. Adolescents may perform muscle relaxation 2-3 times a day to relieve stress, to prepare for uncomfortable situations, or to keep them calm and relaxed. Likewise, adolescents can learn to cope with pain and nervousness through belly breathing. Belly breathing is a special way of controlling one's breathing that can help adolescents relax and feel better when dealing with uncomfortable situations. Adolescents may use muscle relaxation when they may notice feelings of anxiety, while having these feelings or after the feelings to help keep them away. By becoming aware of their breathing, and learning to use belly breathing, it will become more natural and automatic for adolescents to use this coping skill more effectively ("Coping Skills Toolbox," n.d).

Moreover, journaling may be another beneficial coping skill for adolescents to release their feelings, thoughts, concerns, upsetting emotional experiences, and doubts that may cause distress in their daily lives. Journaling may be a way for adolescents to reflect on themselves or share with others what they are going through. Through journaling adolescents can write, type, or draw positive or negative thoughts and feelings ("Coping Skills Toolbox," n.d). When

working with high school students in a small group coping skills journaling can be a useful strategy for students to release either their positive or negative thoughts and feelings. Journaling becomes a practical tool to explore issues and personal concerns that the students may have been reluctant to share openly in the group sessions (Steen, Liu, Rose, & Merino, 2018).

Furthermore, when students may feel frustrated, worried, or enraged they may write a letter to others by telling them they are thankful for something positive they have done for them. When students are being thankful for what they have, things that have happened to them, or for other people in their lives, giving thanks may help students feel better and may have a more positive attitude to deal with the daily hassles of life. Despite the infinite number of coping skills that exist today, adolescents may utilize multiple coping strategies to better deal with feelings of distress, anxiety, fear, desperation, and anger.

Professional School Counselors

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) defined school counselors as vital members of the educational process who improve student success by implementing a comprehensive school program. School counselors work collaboratively with other educators and stakeholders in the school setting to promote student welfare, development, and success. School counselors are uniquely qualified to address the academic, socio-emotional, and career development of all students. Also, the school counselor's role is one that facilitates student development in the area of multiculturalism, and diversity for culturally competent practice (ASCA, 2020).

According to the American School Counselor Association, school counselors are certified-licensed educators with the minimum of a master's degree in school counseling. School counselors must meet the state certification/licensure standards and fulfill continuing education

requirements. School counselors uphold ethical and professional standards of ASCA to promote the development of the school counseling program in the following areas: define, deliver, manage, and stress (ASCA, 2020).

School counselors implement a comprehensive school counseling program in all educational levels (elementary, middle junior high, and high school) that enhances student academic, socio-emotional, and career readiness success. School counselors create school counseling programs to improve student outcomes by providing individual student academic planning, deliver classroom lessons, providing individual or group counseling, and collaboration with families, teachers, and administrators for student success. Moreover, school counselors help all students apply academic achievement strategies, manage emotions and apply interpersonal skills, goal setting, problem-solving, career awareness, and help students to plan for post-secondary options (ASCA, 2020).

Additionally, school counselors are obligated to provide comprehensive services to all their students, including those who may be undocumented (Morrison et al., 2016). To effectively help undocumented immigrant students in the school setting, school counselors must attend to the academic, socio-emotional, and career services available to undocumented students. School counselors must understand the daily struggles that undocumented students and their families face (Morrison et al., 2016). To better serve undocumented students school counselors need to recognize the existing immigration-related laws, build community families partnerships, and gain support from school personnel to enhance student success (Chen, Budianto & Wong, 2010).

Due to linguistic and cultural barriers as well as fear of deportation, undocumented immigrants have remained invisible to the general public and are often subject to the same if not, more, discrimination, marginalization as their legal counterparts (Chen, Budianto & Wong,

2010). In this manner, school counselors can provide psychoeducational groups focused on stress management, anxiety, and depression as an appropriate method of reaching out and providing support to undocumented immigrant students that fear being “outed” as illegal (Talleyrand & Vojtech, 2019). Given the fears surrounding deportation, ensuring that their students will be safe in disclosing their situation and exploring their feelings related to immigration is an important responsibility for school counselors (Talleyrand & Vojtech, 2019).

Group Counseling

The Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW) has defined group work as the practice which involves application and skill in group facilitation to assist an interdependent collection of people to reach mutual intrapersonal, interpersonal, and work-related goals (ASGW, 2000). The (ASGW) has identified four types of group work: a task group which applies effective strategies to accomplish group tasks and goals; a psycho-educational group which applies group strategies for personal and interpersonal problems; a group counseling which applies strategies to temporary issues; lastly a psychotherapy group which applies strategies for dysfunctional patterns of behavior (ASGW, 2000).

All professional school counselors (PSC) must possess a set of competencies and principles to facilitate short-term groups to address the student’s academic, career, and socio-emotional issues. As the group facilitator, the professional school counselor identifies the type of group to be facilitated and concisely states the purpose and goals of the group. The professional school counselor screens prospective group members whose goals and needs are compatible with the type of group that is being facilitated. Additionally, a professional school counselor facilitates a written consent form to parents or guardians of student participation in small groups. The professional school counselor is responsible for facilitating group progress

from stage to stage, understands the importance of each stage of group development, and promotes group members' safety, privacy, and trust. In the ongoing group, the professional school counselor utilizes various counseling skills to assist participants in generating meaningful experiences. For the time of termination of the group, the school counselor may conduct formal or informal assessments to measure the outcomes of the group and provide necessary follow-up with group members (ASGW, 2000).

It may seem that psychoeducational group counseling is an effective way for professional school counselors to assist students with practical coping techniques to deal with past and current stressful experiences. When working with undocumented students, group counseling may be an effective way to address the unique challenges faced specifically by undocumented immigrant youth. It is essential for all school counselors to recognize and consider the ethical and legal challenges when working with undocumented high school students in a small group. The professional school counselor must abide by the ASCA ethical standards for school counselors. A professional school counselor must inform students of the purposes, goals, techniques, and rules of the procedures under which they may receive group counseling. Parental Informed consent can be difficult to obtain. However, the professional school counselors must recognize their ethical obligation for confidentiality is to minor students but with an understanding of parents'/guardians' legal and inherent rights to make decisions on their child's behalf (ASCA, 2016). School counselors should provide participants with an individual agreement and/or a group contract of confidentiality form to ensure student's confidentiality and safety. It is also important that undocumented students feel safe and comfortable to participate in this small group.

It is vital for all school counselors to be mindful of the sensitive topics that will be addressed in a small group for Latino immigrant undocumented students. School counselors keep information confidential unless legal requirements demand confidential information to be revealed to prevent students to harm of self or others in the group. Also, school counselors recognize that providing services to minors in a school setting requires school counselors to collaborate with students' parents/guardians as appropriate (ASCA, 2016). In addition, school counselors should provide parents and/or guardians with a consent form in which they may accept or decline their child participation in this group.

Positive stories of undocumented immigrants to establish an inclusive culture that embraces and supports the undocumented student population in any school setting. In order to identify undocumented students for the small group, counselors may seek recommendations from teachers and staff to provide private safe spaces to allow students to develop a trusting relationship to speak openly and comfortably about their legal status. School counselors should provide teachers and staff with a referral form to refer students who may benefit from this small group. Because of its inherent therapeutic value, group work can prove to be a powerful medium for instilling hope and fostering resilience for this vulnerable group of students (Chen, Budianto & Wong, 2010).

Review of published relevant group counseling curriculums

An example of a small group curriculum would be one implemented by Edwards, Adams, Waldo, Hadfield, and Biegel (2014) at a middle school in New Mexico. Researchers developed a small group curriculum to address the impact of mindfulness to decrease stress, self-compassion, and to decrease levels of psychological symptoms such as anxiety and depression of Latino middle school students. In this stress group reduction, Edwards et al. (2014) focused on

20 Latino middle school students who participated in 8-session structured groups using the Mindfulness-Based Stress for Teens curriculum (Edwards et al., 2014). Students were referred by their teachers, school counselors, administrators, therapists, and parents. The informed consent was obtained by the schools from the students and their guardians before the group began.

In this group participants responded to three different scales: the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)-which focused on the presence or absence of attention to or awareness of what is occurring in the present moment; the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)-which focused on student's feelings of hopelessness due to obsessive thinking that everything is wrong; the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)-which focused on student's perception of life events as stressful and the level of distress they are experiencing related to anxiety and depression (Edwards et al., 2014). Edwards et al. (2014) included experiential mindfulness practices such as body meditation, sitting mediation, yoga, and walking meditation, didactic presentations, group sharing related experience, and instruction at-home mindfulness practice assignments to reduce stress, anxiety, or depression (Edwards et al., 2014).

During the first and second sessions students were introduced to mindfulness through an exercise to come to awareness through five senses in which students identified their thoughts, feelings, and physical reactions to a stressful situation. In the next three sessions students focused on replacing unpleasant thoughts and manage negative emotions. Students focused on cultivating self-care gained awareness of their bodies through walking meditation, practice deep breathing, and exploring positive experiences. In the last three sessions students learned and developed coping strategies to cope with stress and build a resilient mind. Edwards et al. (2014) found that a healthy way to deal with stress is trying not to block painful emotions, instead,

learning to let go and engaging in forgiveness is a helpful way to cope with stress (Edwards et al., 2014). Researchers found that students in the group showed a decrease in depression symptoms and perceived stress. Edwards et al. (2014) also found that student's levels of self-compassion increased by using different coping strategies such as body relaxation, deep breathing, positive affirmations, yoga, and walking meditation (Edwards et al., 2014).

Adeynika M. Akinsulure-Smith (2009) implemented an effective psychoeducational group intervention for high school refugees and asylum-seeking students in New York City. The group met weekly for 7 weeks for 60- minutes each session. Students were recruited by counselors and teachers based on past and current trauma history and distress. The primary goal of the group was to provide students with stress management skills who experienced traumatic experiences, loss of sense of the future, anxiety, family separation, exposure to violence, and physical or emotional distress. The techniques offered students with a history of trauma new ways to cope with both their past and current traumatic experiences (Akinsulure-Smith, 2009).

In the group, students were encouraged to share coping skills from their cultural heritage. Akinsulure-Smith (2009) found that one student used music in his culture as a way of relaxation, while other students expressed how ceremonies helped them to re-connect with their ancestors to improve their mental health. Moreover, other students reported to use religious and community leaders as a source of stress management and relief (Akinsulure-Smith, 2009).

During the first sessions students practiced an introduction exercise in which students shared his or her name and the length of time in the United States. Moreover, students began sharing personal traumatic experiences, thoughts, and feelings about their past and current emotional distress. In the subsequent sessions, students began to explore the different types of activities people use to relax. Students focused on progressive muscle relaxation by tightening

certain muscle groups to create tension and then releasing them (Akinsulure-Smith, 2009). Also, students learned basic relaxation skills to reduce anxiety. Akinsulure-Smith (2009) indicated that basic relaxation skill was used to teach students to pair their anxiety with a positive memory. Moreover, when students faced anxiety, they were able to draw on positive memories to help self-soothe (Akinsulure-Smith, 2009). Throughout the sessions students shared and learned new coping strategies to reduce psychological distress caused by past and current traumatic life events. Students reported that newly learned techniques helped them to manage their psychological distress and reduce anxiety (Akinsulure-Smith, 2009).

Summary of Literature Review

As described in the research review in this section, high school students who participated in psychoeducational small groups and who reported psychological distress have reported reduction of stress symptoms. Also, students stressed the importance of learning stress management skills to reduce anxiety. Overall, students reported the benefits of different coping strategies for emotional and behavioral relief which they incorporated into their daily lives. It may have seemed that psychoeducational group counseling is an effective method for professional school counselors to teach high school students practical coping techniques to deal with past and current stressful experiences. A professional school counselor may implement a psychoeducational group counseling for Latino immigrant undocumented high school students who have experienced stress associated with having an undocumented status. School counselors can provide a group counseling designed specifically to help undocumented students process their experiences as immigrants, self-disclosure, and catharsis to ease some of the marginalization and create a supporting setting (Morrison et al., 2016).

The unique socioeconomic, educational, and language barriers faced by Latino undocumented immigrants may shape their lives and affect their academic, career advancement, and well-being. Furthermore, many Latino undocumented immigrants face other challenges such as fear of deportation, family separation, racism, lack of access to health services, discrimination, and acculturative stress that aggravate their educational and socio-emotional well-being. As indicated in the literature review, Latino undocumented students face unique stressors at school and outside of the school setting may impact their lives and affect their academic and social/emotional success. For example, Latino undocumented students attend underserved schools, many students come from low socio-economic families, lack of parental support, language barrier, lack of federal financial aid to continue on to college, constant fear of deportation and legal constraints may prevent them to achieve success. As a result, many Latino undocumented students may experience feelings of stress, loneliness, and hopelessness about their uncertain future, thus, disengaging from their educational pathways. These stressors faced specifically by Latino undocumented high school students may be addressed in a small group curriculum to learn simple coping skills to reduce anxiety, build resilience, develop personal growth, and receive emotional support in a safe and comfortable space. This proposed small group curriculum may provide students an opportunity to address how their relationships with others have been affected by their immigration status, how their personal identity has been shaped by their status, and to share their thoughts and concerns about their future. Additionally, this small group curriculum may provide an opportunity to students to validate and to share similar life experiences with others who have experienced similar stressors.

Through the findings in this review regarding; adolescent development of undocumented immigrant adolescents, implications of undocumented status for Latino adolescents, potential

stressors and risk factors among the Latino unauthorized youth, standard coping skills taught to adolescents, school counselors, small group counseling and successful school-based small group curriculums on stress management for adolescents it is identifiable that a small group curriculum for Latino undocumented immigrant high school students is needed.

Chapter 3

Project Audience and Implementation Factors

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to create a 7-week long small group curriculum to teach Latino undocumented high school students practical coping skills. This small group is designed to teach students stress management coping strategies to effectively manage the stress associated with everyday experiences, fears, worries, and challenges. A professional school counselor will facilitate the group counseling sessions in which students will learn simple coping skills to cope with academic, social, and personal barriers. Each student will have the opportunity to share thoughts and feelings to identify and to acknowledge the causes of stress at home, school, and community. While each student will respond to and resolve stress differently, this small group allows undocumented students to learn effective stress management coping skills to develop stress reduction by regulating one's emotions and thoughts.

Development of Project

The inspiration for this project is that I have been working for the LAUSD for almost ten years as a teacher's assistant for high school English Learners (EL). Many of the English learners I have worked with disclosed to me that they were undocumented. I also learned the immigrant experience through the students' narratives. As an English Learner myself and son of immigrant parents, I had experienced the academic, personal, and social-emotional barriers that many of these undocumented students encountered in school. Many of these undocumented immigrant students shared feelings and thoughts of past and present emotional distress.

As I began my school counseling fieldwork at a high school in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles, I requested my field site supervisor to allow me to work closely with students who had recently immigrated to the United States. My field supervisor assigned me to a group

of students to meet once a week throughout the semester to review grades and school-related issues. As I started to develop a rapport and a trusting relationship with these students, they began disclosing the harsh realities of adapting to a new school environment. Many of the students shared feelings and thoughts of stress caused by migration-related stressors that were negatively impacting them at school and their personal lives. For instance, I recalled talking to an 11th grade Latino male student from Mexico who had recently immigrated to the United States. The student disclosed being stressed almost every day since he could not find a job due to his illegal status where he could get enough money to send to Mexico to support his family. The student reported that stress was affecting his school performance to the point of him thinking about dropping out of high school.

As I started to witness an increasing number of foreign-born students on campus, I began to realize that some schools are not well prepared to meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of the undocumented student population. The lack of support and availability of resources for undocumented students in schools, made me understand how vulnerable the undocumented student population becomes when schools fail to address their needs.

This small group curriculum is for Latino immigrant undocumented high school students to learn stress management skills to enhance a better learning experience in a new school environment. The development of this small group curriculum for Latino immigrant undocumented students is based on two published group counseling curriculums cited in the literature review. Edwards et al. (2014) implemented a small group curriculum for Latino middle school students to decrease levels of stress, anxiety, and depression through mindfulness practices. In this small group curriculum students learned and developed coping strategies to cope with stress related to unpleasant thoughts. Likewise, Akinsulure-Smith (2009)

implemented a group intervention for high school refugees and asylum-seeking to provide students with stress management skills who experienced traumatic experiences. In this group intervention, researchers offered students techniques to cope with both their past and current traumatic experiences. After completing the literature review, I decided to create a small group curriculum for Latino immigrant undocumented students to learn and to develop practical coping skills to cope with the stress related to having an undocumented status. In a similar manner as the two small group curriculums presented in the literature review, this proposed small group curriculum provides Latino immigrant undocumented students with commonly used stress management strategies to develop stress reduction practices. This small group curriculum adopted some commonly used coping skills for adolescents from the Toolbox Coping Skills such as self-talk, muscle relaxation, deep breathing, and positive memory to address distressing times faced specifically by undocumented youth.

Intended Audience

This project is intended for professional school counselors to utilize who are working with high school students. The professional school counselor will facilitate a small group for Latino undocumented high school students who struggle to manage the stress related to academic and personal/social experiences. In this small group counseling, Latino undocumented high school students will learn simple stress management skills to effectively deal with the stress associated with having an undocumented status.

Personal Qualifications

This project is designed to be administered by a credentialed professional school counselor for High School level students. Because this is a project where the professional school counselor will be working with students in the school environment, the professional school

counselor should hold a Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) credential, a master's degree, and abiding by the American School Counseling Association's professional standards. The professional school counselor may work with students individually or in small groups to provide students with assistance to improve skills in the areas of academic, personal/social, and career development. The professional school counselor is trained in group facilitation to provide group counseling services to all students in a K-12 school setting. The group facilitator has the responsibility to screen potential group members, to address informed consent, to clarify the purpose and goals of the group, and to define the limits of confidentiality. In addition, the school counselor is prepared to help students overcome issues impeding achievement, help students to identify problems and possible consequences so students can make decisions to take proper action. Also, the professional school counselor must be aware of the adolescent development, must be culturally competent and aware of the current events surrounding immigration policies that might affect the student's academic and socio-emotional development.

Environment and Equipment

When a professional school counselor is conducting the group counseling sessions, a classroom or conference room or another private space is necessary. The room should be big enough to sit about five to eight students. The furniture in the room must be moveable where students should be able to have enough room to place chairs in a circle. The equipment needed for this small group is paper, dry erase markers, black or blue pens, pencils, and envelopes. A professional school counselor will also need access to a whiteboard and dry erase markers.

Formative Evaluation

The group counseling sessions are designed to be conducted by a high school level professional school counselor. For this project, feedback was received from three professional

school counselors at a large urban High School in the San Fernando Valley. To collect feedback from them, I asked each professional school counselor to evaluate my group counseling project outline. The three professional school counselors were asked to evaluate this small group counseling curriculum based upon age-appropriate group activities, effectiveness, and organization of the sessions.

Project Outline

This small group counseling curriculum is designed for Latino undocumented immigrant high school students who are having difficulty managing stress and anxiety at home, school, and community. The following outline highlights the goals and expectations that will be addressed in the sessions.

Week 1: Introduction

Students will understand the importance of confidentiality and they will learn the basic group guidelines. Group members will participate in an icebreaker activity to get to know each other in the group and share their past or current experiences.

Week 2: Common Sources of Stress for Latino immigrant undocumented youth

Students will identify what common sources of stress for Latino immigrant undocumented youth. In addition, students will learn about the different signs of stress. The facilitator will provide an activity handout in which students will write their own examples of possible ways of stress for Latino undocumented students.

Week 3: Let's Breathe!

Students will explore numerous activities to relax. They will focus on deep breathing technique to help them feel more comfortable.

Week 4: Muscle Relaxation!

The facilitator will guide students through deep muscle relaxation skill. Students will focus on tightening and releasing different muscles groups in their bodies.

Week 5: Are you talking to me?

In this lesson, students will provide an example of a distressing time faced specifically by undocumented youth. Students will focus on positive statements to replace negative thoughts. This activity will help students to boost their confidence when facing distressing times.

Week 6: Remembering Something Special

Students will provide specific examples of the use of imagery to pair their anxiety with a positive memory.

Week 7: Time for Reflection

Students will reflect on the skills taught in this group and what skills may be more helpful in the future. Students will share any improvements or changes they have made since they started their participation in the group.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Summary of Project

The purpose of this graduate project is to design a small group curriculum for Latino undocumented high school students to learn stress management coping skills to reduce stress related to everyday experiences, worries, fears and challenges at school, home, and community. The small group would be facilitated by a professional school counselor who would guide undocumented students to utilize stress management skills to help them cope with stressors they face. By sharing similar experiences, undocumented students will be able to learn healthy and effective stress management coping strategies. The hope is that the small group would provide a safe space where undocumented students would feel safe and comfortable to share their lived experiences, fears, and concerns with others.

Evaluation Results

To evaluate this project, three high school counselors at a High School in the San Fernando Valley received a cover letter along with an evaluation survey. I will refer to the first counselor as counselor “X”, the second counselor as counselor “Y”, and the last counselor as counselor “Z.” The three high school counselors received the following statement as the cover letter addressing the purpose, targeted population, and expected goals of this small group curriculum:

“The purpose of this project is to design a small group curriculum for Latino undocumented immigrant high school students who struggle to cope with the stress, fear, and shame associated with having an undocumented status. This small group curriculum would be facilitated by a professional school counselor to teach Latino undocumented immigrant students practical stress management skills. The hope is that the students will learn different coping skills

to develop personal growth and resilience to become academically and socio/emotionally successful.”

The evaluation survey was distributed to three high school counselors who were asked to answer several questions using the following five-point scale: (5) Strongly Agree, (4) Agree, (3) Undecided/Neutral, (2) Disagree, and (1) Strongly Disagree.

1. Do you think this small group curriculum would be beneficial for Latino undocumented high school students?
2. Do you think this small group curriculum could be easily facilitated at my high school?
3. Do you think the lessons seem appropriate for the purpose of the small group curriculum?
4. Do you think lessons and goals are well organized and clearly stated?

Thank you very much for taking the time to evaluate my graduate project. The development of this project is under the supervision of my project chair Dr. Sands. This evaluation is intended for you to provide to facilitator and the project/small group curriculum for feedback. Your recommendations and comments will be a valuable part of the considerations of feasibility of this proposed project. Your names will remain confidential. Please write in the space below, any and all additional comments to assist me with improving this proposed small group curriculum.

All three school counselors XYZ stated that they “strongly agree” that this small group curriculum would be beneficial for undocumented Latino high school students who are struggling academically and socio-emotionally. In response the question posed, ‘Do you think this curriculum could be easily facilitated at my high school? counselor X indicated “strongly agree” while counselors YZ, indicated “agree.” All three counselors XYZ stated that they “agree” that sessions are well structured, organize, and materials are easily accessible.

Additionally, in response to the question posed, ‘Do you think lessons and goals are well organized and clearly stated?’ counselor X indicated “agree.” Counselors YZ indicated “strongly agree.”

Recommendations for Implementation

All three school counselors XYZ provided remarkable recommendations about this project. Counselor X suggested that, “In order to implement this small group at my school or at any school setting, the school should place a responsible and proper system to recruit participants, due to the sensitive topic for some students to choose to disclose their legal status.” Likewise, counselor Y stated that, “If it is properly adapted for middle school level, this curriculum would be also beneficial for undocumented immigrant middle school students. Additionally, counselor Z expressed that, “There is a need to implement a similar small group curriculum to support other ethnic undocumented immigrant students at the high school and middle school level.” Based on the recommendations from the three evaluators, I would modify the content of some of the lessons to be appropriate for undocumented immigrant middle school students. The suggestions were helpful because I was able to recognize that it is critical for schools to establish a school culture of trust for undocumented students to feel safe to disclose their legal status, thus, recognizing the needs and reliable sources to better support undocumented immigrant students.

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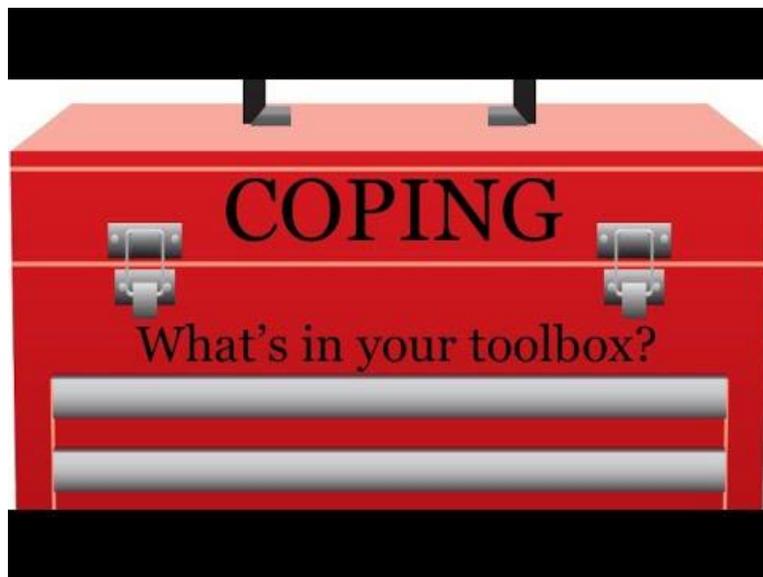
Appendix A

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Dear Professional School Counselor,

Psychoeducational small group work facilitated by a professional school counselor may be the most effective way to work with high school students. Working with students in small groups is one strategy for helping students become more successful. In addition, having multiple students in group counseling sessions allows students to teach each other techniques that work and those that might not work. This proposed small group curriculum is designed to teach Latino undocumented immigrant high school students practical stress management coping strategies in a seven-week format. The professional school counselor would guide undocumented students to learn effective stress management coping skills that may help students develop stress reduction by regulating one's emotions and thoughts related to stressful everyday experiences. In this small group counseling, Latino undocumented students will learn a different coping strategy each week. In this guide, recommended time for the length of the group is provided, along with a list of materials needed for the lessons. Facilitators may modify, add, or delete lessons to be aligned with your school's needs. It is recommended that for this small group curriculum the school counselor is fluent in Spanish. School counselors should provide teachers and staff with a referral form to refer students who may benefit from this small group. School counselors should provide parents and/or guardians with a consent form in which they may accept or decline their child participation in this group. The goal of this small group counseling is to assist Latino undocumented high school students with developing coping skills to positively impact their school achievement and to increase social/personal skills.

SMALL GROUP COPING SKILLS CURRICULUM FOR LATINO UNDOCUMENTED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



APPENDIX B



WEEK 1: Introduction

Objectives:

1. Students will understand the importance of confidentiality.
2. Students will learn the basic group guidelines.
3. Students will get to know each other by sharing similar life experiences & build empathy
4. Students will learn the importance of learning stress management skills.
5. The facilitator will review the group's purpose, expectations, and upcoming sessions.

Time:

1. 30-45 minutes

Materials:

1. Sign-in sheet
2. Pens or pencils & paper
3. Mini-bags of m&ms candy (facilitator may purchase any kind of candy color that already has a variety of color)
4. M&ms questions handout (one copy per student)
5. Group guidelines handout (one copy per student)

Procedures:

1. Prepare all materials
2. Arrange desks in a circle and have students sit at desks. Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the group sessions. Pass out group guidelines handout and discuss the importance of confidentiality and when it may be broken (check for understanding & questions from students).
3. Pass out m&ms questions handout, pens or pencils, paper, & mini-bags of candy (one for each student). Instruct them not to eat the candy yet, though! Explain that today in this ice breaker they will have a chance to get to know each other & learn something about someone's life experiences. Considering this, explain students that they should try to understand someone else before making any judgements or criticizing them.
4. Instruct students to open bags of candy & randomly pull out three m&ms (all three must be of different color). If two of the m&ms are repeated, please instruct students to eat one of the repeated m&ms. Explain that they need to keep pulling m&ms out of their mini-bags until all three of their candy are of different color. After they have their three different candy, you will tell them what each candy color represents on the m&ms questions handout. Explain that they will need to answer three questions from the m&ms handout that match their candy color & they will share their answers with others.
5. Give students a few minutes to think & write their three answers with the group.
6. Invite students to stand up and share his or her name, country of origin, length of time in the United States and then share their three answers from the m&ms questions handout. Continue this process until every student has the chance to share his or her responses.

7. Invite students to share immediate feelings and thoughts following the ice breaker group activity. Please remind them not to forget to eat the rest of their m&ms!

m&m's Candy Game



More about Me

Mas sobre mi

 <p>What is your favorite childhood memory? Cual es tu memoria favorita de tu ninez?</p>	 <p>What do you like most about high school so far? What things do not like? Ques es lo que mas te gusta de high school? Que no te gusta?</p>
 <p>Who do you admire most and why? A quien admiras mas y por que?</p>	 <p>What are the most important goals in your life? Cuales son las metas mas importantes en tu vida?</p>
 <p>What is one accomplishment people might not know about that makes you proud? Cual es un logro que la gente podria no saber que te hace sentir orgulloso?</p>	 <p>What is the best piece of advice you've ever received? Cual ha sido el mejor consejo que has recibido?</p>

Adapted from M&M and Skittles Icebreaker. (2017) from <https://www.mnpta.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf>

GROUP GUIDELINES

1. Maintain confidentiality-Mantener confidencialidad
2. Be respectful with others-Ser respetuoso con los demas
3. Only one person can speak at a time-Solo una persona puede hablar a la vez
4. Use only positive language-Usa solo lenguaje positive
5. Everyone will have a chance to participate-Cada uno tendra la oportunidad de participar

(Adapted from Missouri Guidance Small Group Counseling Guide (2015) Small Group Counseling Module,(1-43)

WEEK 2: Common sources of stress for immigrant Latino youth

Goals:

1. Students will learn the signs of stress
2. Students will identify common sources of stress for Latino immigrant undocumented youth
3. Students will normalize feelings of stress

Time:

1. 30-45 minutes

Materials:

1. Sign-in sheet
2. Pens or pencils
3. Activity handout (one copy for each student)
4. Signs of stress handout



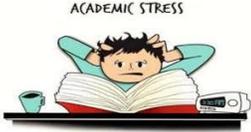
Procedure:

1. Prepare all materials
2. Begin explaining that in today's lesson they will review the common sources of stress for Latino immigrant undocumented youth. Start a conversation by asking students:
 - What things can you say about Latino undocumented students who face stressful situations at school, home, and community?
 - What are some common ways that Latino undocumented students get stressed?
 - How do you think Latino undocumented immigrant youth might deal with stress?
3. Pass out the common signs of stress for Latino immigrant undocumented youth handout (one copy per student). Review these signs of stress and have students to brainstorm other possible signs of stress for Latino undocumented students that they may want to include on their handouts.
4. Pass out activity handout (one copy for each student). Explain that in this activity they will write examples (on the handout) of ways in which Latino immigrant undocumented youth get stressed. Facilitator may provide examples on whiteboard (if available). For example, facilitator may indicate that a common source of stress for Latino undocumented students is language barrier. Facilitator can explain that undocumented immigrant students may feel uncomfortable talking in English because their English is not perfect. Indicate that this example may be labeled as an example of academic and social stress.
5. Give them time to brainstorm possible ways in which Latino undocumented students might feel stressed. Instruct them to write their examples in each corresponding box. Check in with students for questions, comments and concerns about this activity.
6. Close the session by reminding students the importance of recognizing healthy ways to cope with stressful situations.

6 common sources of stress for immigrant Latino youth

Name:

Date:

<p>Academic stress Estres academico</p> 	<p>Social stress Estres social</p> 
<p>Family conflict Estres por un conflicto familiar</p> 	<p>World events Estres por algun evento mundial</p> 

Traumatic events
Estres por un evento traumatico



Significant life changes
Estres por algun cambio de vida significativo



Source: Smith, Kathleen (2018) Six Common Triggers of Teen Stress. Retrieved April 19, 2020 from <https://www.pycom.net.>common-triggers-teens-stress>

Pay attention!

Atencion!



- **Pay attention to changes emotional changes! You might appear:**
 1. Anxious-ansioso/a
 2. Agitated-agitado/a
 3. Depressed-deprimido/a
- **Pay attention to physical changes! Students under stress often complain of:**
 1. Headaches-dolores de cabeza
 2. Stomachaches-dolores de estomago
 3. Other aches & pains-otros dolores
- **Look for behavioral changes!**
 1. Trouble sleeping-dificultad para dormir
 2. Eating habits-habitos alimenticios
 3. Avoidance of normal activities-evitar actividades normales

Source: Smith, Kathleen (2018) Six Common Triggers of Teen Stress. Retrieved April 19, 2020 from <https://www.pycom.net.>common-triggers-teens-stress>

WEEK 3: Let's Breathe!

Goals:

1. Students will explore different activities to relax
2. Students will focus on deep breathing exercise (Belly Breathing)

Time:

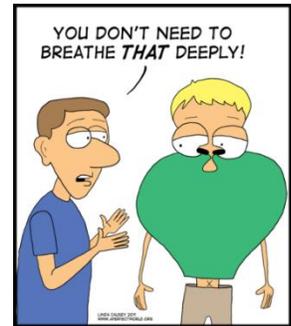
1. 30-45 minutes

Material:

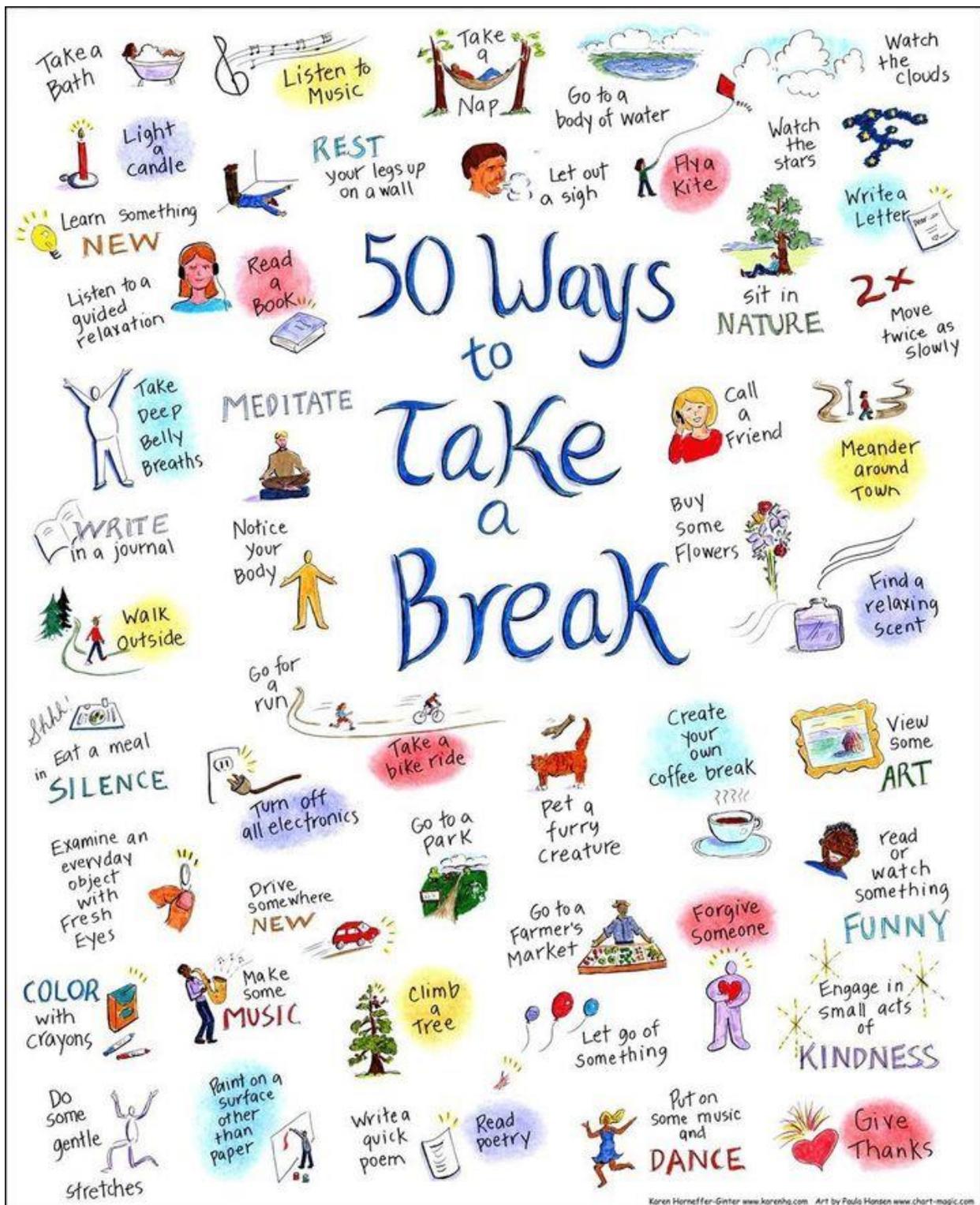
1. 50 ways to relax handout (print one for each student)

Procedure:

1. Sign-in sheet
2. Prepare 50 ways to relax handout (one copy for each student).
3. Pass out handout. Explain students that today they will explore different activities that people use to relax. Encourage them to share the activities they had found relaxing and the difficulties they had faced when trying to relax.
4. Explain them that today they will focus on belly breathing. Describe them that they can use this skill anytime they feel nervous, stressed, angry or are in pain. Explain them that they can use this technique when they first start noticing these feelings, while they have these feelings or after they experienced these feelings to help them feel more comfortable.
5. Model each step for students in preparation for their participation.
6. Provide students with the following directions:
 - I. Instruct students to stand up to get in a comfortable position & let arms and hands relaxed downward
 - II. Keep you body relaxed & eyes closed
 - III. Put your hand on your lower abdomen (belly) & imagine your belly is a balloon that right now is deflated
 - IV. Breath in slowly & deeply through your nose while you feel the balloon (belly) is inflating
 - V. Slowly exhale through your mouth while you feel the balloon deflating
 - VI. Repeat this process several times
7. Practice several times with the group until they achieve a comfortable competence with deep breathing.
8. Encourage students to practice on their own at home or in a comfortable space. Invite students to teach deep breathing technique to a family member or a friend.
9. Explain them that once they develop this habit, it will become more natural and automatic process.
10. You may provide students with illustrations of deep breathing technique for them to practice on their own.



Adapted from Stress Reduction Activities for Students. (2019) Retrieved from:
<https://www.healthiersf.org/resources/pubs/StressReductionpdf>



The Coping Skills Toolbox-Baldwin County Public Schools. Retrieved April 20, 2020 from <https://www.bcbe.org.>lib>Domain>Coping Skills Toolkit pdf>



WEEK 4: Muscle Relaxation!

Goals:

1. Students will learn deep muscle relaxation
2. Students will focus on tightening and releasing different muscles groups in their bodies

Time:

1. 30-45 minutes

Materials:

1. No materials needed (facilitator may provide students with illustrations/diagrams to help them identify/visualize muscle groups before practicing the exercise)

Procedure:

1. Sign-in sheet
2. Tell students that this technique will help them to relax by tightening/squeezing their muscles and then releasing different muscles groups from head to toe.
3. Demonstrate/model each step for students before practicing this exercise.
4. Read the following directions:
 - i. Have students to get into a comfortable position (students may sit or lay down on their backs depending on space)
 - ii. Start by squeezing all the muscles in your face (nose, mouth, cheeks, eyes, eyebrows & forehead). Wrinkle your face!
 - iii. Try to hold all your face muscles in this position and count to ten. Let go the tension and...relax
 - iv. Now you can start to do the same process with each muscle in your body working your way down from your face
 - v. Lift your shoulders and neck up to your ears. Hold them tightly for ten seconds and...relax
 - vi. Then begin stretching your arms in front of you and close your fists tightly. Then hold it for ten seconds and...relax
 - vii. Now you can bend your elbows and make a muscle in your upper arm. Hold it for ten seconds and...relax you can feel the tension leaving your arms
 - viii. Now pretend you are squeezing something tight in your hands. Hold for ten seconds and...relax
 - ix. Arch your back away from your chair or off the floor. Hold for ten seconds and...relax
 - x. Make your stomach hard. Hold it in this position for ten seconds and...relax
 - xi. Tighten your hips and buttocks muscles for ten seconds and...relax
 - xii. Now you can start bending your ankles toward your body as far as you can. Hold them in that position for ten seconds and...relax
 - xiii. Now let's curl our toes under as far as we can! We are going to hold them for ten seconds and...relax
 - xiv. We're almost there!
 - xv. Now we are going to rest for ten seconds before our final exercise!

- xvi. Now you are going to squeeze all your muscles in your body. Try to hold for ten seconds and...relax. You are going to feel the tension leaving your body.
- 5. Instruct students to sit quietly or (lie quietly) so they enjoy the feeling of relaxation for a couple minutes.
- 6. Practice this activity with the group until students feel competent to try this technique on their own.
- 7. Encourage students to practice this activity whenever they may feel stressed out, angry and nervous. They can practice deep muscle relaxation at home or in any comfortable place they can find.

Adapted from Stress Reduction Activities for Students. (2019) Retrieved from:
<https://www.healthiersf.org/resources/pubs/StressReductionpdf>

WEEK 5: Are you talking to me?

Goals:

1. Students will provide an example of a distressing time faced specifically by undocumented youth
2. Students will focus on positive statements to replace negative thoughts
3. Students will develop thoughts to be more positive, optimistic & to build confidence

Time:

1. 30-45 minutes

Materials:

1. Sign-in sheet
2. Pens or pencils
3. Index cards (preferably 3x5)
4. Change your words! handout (one copy per student)
5. Positive statements activity (facilitator's model)



Procedure:

1. Prepare all materials.
2. Explain that in today's lesson students will learn how to replace negative thoughts/statements with positive affirmations that will help them cope through distressing times.
3. Pass out the change your words! handout (on next page).
4. Begin the lesson by asking students the following questions:
 - a) how often do you use any of the words/phrases listed on the handout when you express your feelings or thoughts to other people?
 - b) do you talk back to yourself in preparation before facing a challenge? If so, how did that make you feel?
 - c) how did you cope with fear during that challenge?
5. Give students a few minutes to share their responses/thoughts with the group.
6. Pass out index cards (one of each per student). Explain that this activity will help them feel more optimistic, positive and feel more confident to fight negative thoughts.
7. Explain that each student will follow the facilitator's model to write down their own (on each side of given index card) a coping/thought positive statement for each difficult or distressing situation-(something you can tell yourself that will help you get through).
8. Facilitator may provide an example of a distressing time faced specifically by undocumented youth. For example, the facilitator might share how discouraging it is for undocumented students to find out that even though they are excellent students and they meet all the requirements to go to a four-year university, it is economically unaffordable.
9. Give students time to reflect on and share specific examples of a distressing time faced specifically by undocumented high school students.
10. Encourage students to carry these index cards home to repeat these statements in front of a mirror to help them get through distressing times.

(Adapted from: The Coping Skills Toolbox-Baldwin County Public Schools.
<https://www.bcbe.org/>lib>Domain>Coping Skills Toolkit pdf>)

Change your words!

Instead of Thinking -	Try Thinking +
Must	Prefer
Should	Choose to
Have to	Want
Can't	Choose not to
Ought	Had better
All	Many
Always	Often
Can't stand	Don't like
Awful	Highly undesirable
Bad person	Bad behavior
I am a failure	I failed at

Instead of Saying -	Exchange With +
I have to do well.	I want to do well.
You shouldn't do that.	I prefer you not do that.
You never help me.	You rarely help me.
I can't stand my job.	I don't like my job.
You are a bad person	That behavior is undesirable.
I'm a loser.	I failed at this one task.

Instead of saying-	Exchange With +
Anxious	Concerned
Depressed	Sad
Angry	Annoyed
Guilt	Remorse
Shame	Regret
Hurt	Disappointed
Jealous	Concern for my relationship

The Coping Skills Toolbox-Baldwin County Public Schools. Retrieved April 22, 2020 from <https://www.bcbe.org.>lib>Domain>Coping Skills Toolkit pdf>

Facilitator's model

On front side

Name:	Difficult or Distressing Thought	Date:
	1. I always feel uncomfortable when I try to speak in English with other students in school.	
	2. I cannot stand when some people say that Latino undocumented students cannot go to college.	
	3. I always feel a loser when I do not get good grades on my report card.	
	4. I always feel ashamed when some people say that Latino undocumented immigrants should not be allowed to be here.	
	5. I always feel guilty for leaving my family behind in my home country.	
	6. I always feel frightened when I go to somebody asking for help in my school or in my community because of my status.	

On backside

Positive Statement
1. I can feel comfortable talking even though my English is not perfect.
2. I am determined to pursuit my educational goals after high school even though there are some academic challenges.
3. I can improve my grades for the next report card!
4. I am working hard as any other person, and I deserved to be here as much as anyone else.
5. It's okay to feel guilty for leaving my family behind, even though there are some circumstances of life I cannot control.

6. It's okay to be afraid because of my status, but it is important to ask for help to get the support I needed.

WEEK 6: Remembering something special!

Goals:

1. Students will provide specific examples of the use of imagery to pair their anxiety with a positive memory

Time:

1. 30-45 minutes

Materials:

1. A small plastic/container
2. Sticky notes
3. Sign-in sheet



Procedure:

1. Before students arrive, facilitator will write the following words on the sticky notes: delight, happiness, trust, hope, safe, peace, faith, confidence, love & calm (different words may be included). Then the facilitator will fold each sticky note and place it in the bag/container.
2. Facilitator will begin the session with a review of the past week's discussion.
3. Invite each student to reach into the bag/container to pick a sticky note with the written word.
4. While holding the sticky note, each student will recall a specific time when he or she had experienced that feeling (positive memory) and pair their anxiety with that particular positive memory.
5. Since students participating in this group had experienced some sense of anxiety, the facilitator may explain that when students may feel stressed, they may be able to draw on the positive memory to help self-soothe. For example, the facilitator might share that he/she always feels a sense of satisfaction when his/her students walk on stage to receive their diplomas of graduation from high school. The facilitator can continue to explain that recalling this positive memory helps him/her self-soothe during stressful times.
6. Allow students time to reflect on the given example. Invite each student to share his/her experiences and feelings with the group. Remind them that even though everyone recalled different memories, almost everyone shares similar feelings.
7. Finish the session with positive attitude and thank students for sharing their personal memories.
8. Encourage students to practice positive memory skill at home.
9. Remind students that the upcoming session will be our last session.

Adapted from The Coping Skills Toolbox-Baldwin County Public Schools. Retrieved from <https://www.bcbe.org.>lib>Domain>Coping Skills Toolkit pdf>

WEEK 7: Time for reflection

Goals:

1. Students will review the skills taught in this group
2. Students will discuss the overall effectiveness
3. Students will reflect on their shared experiences in the group

Time:

1. 30-45 minutes

Materials:

1. Sign-sheet
2. Paper
3. Pens or pencils
4. Envelopes



Procedure:

1. Prepare materials.
2. Begin lesson by reminding students that this will be the last session. Thank them for their participation in the group.
3. Invite students to share their thoughts and feelings about the group. To begin a discussion, you may ask students the following questions:
 - a) what things did you find helpful about the group?
 - b) what skills do you think might be more beneficial to you?
 - c) what things you did not enjoy about the group?
4. Once everyone has shared his or her thoughts, you will provide each student with a piece of paper, an envelope, and a pen.
5. You will instruct students to address the envelopes to themselves. Explain that each student will write a letter to themselves addressing the following questions: what have I learned from this group? And how am I going to use what I have learned in the future?
6. Give students enough time to write their letters. Instruct students not to seal their letters and turn them in to the facilitator.
7. Once all letters are collected, explain that they would receive their letters within two weeks. (you may attach or place a small prize in each envelope upon return) ex. a five-dollar fast food restaurant gift card, a candy etc.
8. Encourage students not to forget to practice at home or at any comfortable space the skills they have learned. Let them know that it is important that they find effective coping strategies that will help them to build resilience to succeed. Remind them that they can still find you at your office for support at any given time. Close the session with this positive statement si se puede! Yes, we can!